

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 4165

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, US

SUBJECT: SECRETARY VANCE MEETS WITH INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF  
THE RED CROSS (ICRC) PRESIDENT

REF: (A) GENEVA 3728 (B) GENEVA 1742

1. ON SATURDAY, MAY 21, SECRETARY VANCE MET WITH ICRC PRESIDENT ALEXANDRE HAY AND ICRC DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS JEAN-PIERRE HOCKE (REF A). FOLLOWING INTRODUCTORY EXCHANGES, THERE WAS A TOUR D'HORIZON OF ICRC CURRENT ACTIVITIES, SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS:

2. ICRC ACTIONS ON BEHALF OF POLITICAL DETAINEES.

A. PRESIDENT HAY NOTED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY RETURNED FROM TEHRAN (REF B) WHERE HE MET WITH THE SHAH AND THE PRIME MINISTER CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL DETAINEES IN IRAN. HAY'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE SHAH SINCERELY SOUGHT CHANGE IN THIS AREA, THAT INDEED HE MIGHT NOT EVEN BE AWARE OF EXCESSES IN THIS REGARD, AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS SIMILARLY WELL-DISPOSED ON THIS SUBJECT. THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO INVITE THE ICRC TO PRISONS IN IRAN, AND HAY VIEWED THIS AS A POSITIVE STEP. HE HOPES FOR EVEN FURTHER IMPROVEMENT. SECRETARY VANCE OBSERVED THAT,  
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DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAN, THE SHAH APPEARED TO BE CONSCIOUS OF THIS PROBLEM AND RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR CHANGE.

B. RECALLING THAT HE HAD RECENTLY VISITED SOUTH AFRICA, AND THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL DETAINEES IN RHODESIA WITH IAN SMITH IN GENEVA LAST JANUARY AS WELL, HAY SAID THAT HE HAD HAD A DIFFICULT TIME WITH RESPECT TO BOTH

THESE COUNTRIES. HE MADE THE POINT THAT HE HAD TALKED WITH MANY OF THE SAME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OF SOUTH AFRICA THAT VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE HAD SPOKEN TO. HE ALLOWED THAT IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO COMPARE NOTES AND SEE WHETHER THE VICE PRESIDENT HAD REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSIONS AS HE HAD CONCERNING THEIR SOUTH AFRICAN INTERLOCUTORS, WHOSE TREATMENT OF HIMSELF HE DESCRIBED AS SHOCKINGLY RUDE. MINISTER OF DEFENSE PIETER BOTHA, FOR INSTANCE, BLUNTLY ACCUSED THE RED CROSS OF SUBSIDIZING CRIMINALS AND SUGGESTED THAT THE ORGANIZATION IS UNDER COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.

C. HAY REPORTED THAT THE SITUATION IN INDONESIA, AS CONTRASTED WITH THAT HE FOUND IN IRAN, WAS VERY SERIOUS AND "NOT SATISFACTORY." ALTHOUGH THE ICRC WAS INVITED TO INDONESIA BY THE GOVERNMENT, IT BECAME CLEAR DURING THE VISIT OF RED CROSS DELEGATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD NO INTENTION OF PROVIDING THE INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR ICRC REPORTS, OR OF PERMITTING THE TYPE OF PRIVATE AND FREE CONTACTS WITH DETAINEES WHICH THE RED CROSS REGARDS AS INDISPENSABLE. INDEED IT APPEARED CLEAR TO HAY AND HIS COLLEAGUES THAT THE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED THE RED CROSS VISITS AS A MEANS OF COVERING UP WITH THE MEDIA JUST PRIOR TO THE INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

D. HAY CHARACTERIZED THE SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO POLITICAL DETAINEES IN URUGUAY AND ARGENTINA AS DISASTROUS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HAY FELT THAT THE SITUATION IN CHILE HAD UNDERGONE A REMARKABLE CHANGE WHEN ONE COMPARED IT TODAY WITH THAT EXISTING AT THE START OF ICRC OPERATIONS THREE OR FOUR YEARS  
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AGO. HAY SAID THAT CHILE WAS NOT "ONE OF THE MOST OPEN COUNTRIES IN LATIN AMERICA" AND IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO GO WHEN AND WHERE HE WISHED TO VISIT PRISONERS WITHIN THEIR PLACES OF DETENTION. THE NEW PROBLEM TODAY, HE SAID, IS THAT OF PEOPLE WHO SIMPLY DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW. TO CONFRONT THIS, THE RED CROSS HAS SUBMITTED A LIST TO PINOCHET OF SOME 1,000 PRISONERS CONCERNING WHOM THEY SOUGHT INFORMATION (REF B). WHILE THE GOC HAD COMPLAINED BITTERLY OVER THE LIST, IT WAS NONETHELESS COMPELLED TO GIVE SPECIFIC AND DETAILED INFORMATION ON ROUGHLY 100 OF THESE CASES. WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT THIS RESPONSE MIGHT ONLY HAVE BEEN TOKEN IN NATURE, AND MIGHT ACCORDINGLY NOT BE FOLLOWED BY OTHER SUBMISSIONS, HAY STILL FELT THAT, TAKEN AT FACE VALUE, THE GOC THUS FAR HAD BEEN EXTRAORDINARILY COOPERATIVE.

### 3. MIDDLE EAST.

A. LEBANON. SECRETARY VANCE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE ROLE THE ICRC HAD PLAYED IN LEBANON, ADDING THAT HE CONTINUES TO BE VERY WORRIED AS TO WHETHER THE LEBANESE WILL BE ABLE TO

SOLVE THEIR BASIC PROBLEM. HAY RESPONDED THAT HE IS VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE SITUATION AND DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT A SOLUTION CAN BE ACHIEVED UNLESS THERE IS A GENERAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM.

B. ISRAEL. HOCKE REMARKED UPON ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO APPLY THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE SAID THAT THE ICRC HAD RECENTLY REAFFIRMED ITS ESTABLISHED POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE CONVENTIONS, AND VOICED CONCERN THAT THIS COULD LEAD TO DIFFERENCES WITH THE NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. HE FELT THAT, WHILE THERE HAD BEEN DIFFICULTIES ON THIS SCORE WITH THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT, THE PROSPECTS WERE STRONG THAT THE SITUATION WOULD DETERIORATE WITH THE NEW GOI. HOCKE EMPHASIZED THAT WHILE THE ICRC'S STAND CONCERNING THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS APPLIED WITH EQUAL FORCE ALIKE TO ISRAELIS AND ARABS, IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THE PRACTICAL EFFECT WAS TO CREATE A SITUATION OF GREATER CONFRONTATION WITH THE FORMER.  
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4. FAR EAST.

A. VIETNAM. TO SECRETARY VANCE'S EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION FOR ASSISTANCE THE ICRC HAD RENDERED AMERICAN INTEREST CASES IN VIETNAM, HAY RESPONDED THAT HE MAINTAINED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE VIETNAMESE RED CROSS AND, THROUGH THEM, ENJOYS A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT. HE MENTIONED THAT THE ICRC IS CONTINUING TO WORK ON 150 VIETNAMESE FAMILY REUNION CASES IN WHICH THERE IS U.S. INTEREST, AND THAT IT WAS SIGNIFICANT THAT, ALTHOUGH NO TANGIBLE RESULTS HAVE YET BEEN ACHIEVED, THE COOPERATION OF THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN EXCELLENT.

B. JAPAN. HAY NOTED THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING GENEVA FOR TOKYO ON MAY 24 TO CALL ON THE EMPEROR AND TO VISIT OTHER RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. AMONG OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SEEK AN INCREASE IN THE JAPANESE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ICRC.

5. ICRC FINANCING. PRESIDENT HAY THEN VOICED HIS THANKS FOR U.S. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ICRC, TO WHICH THE SECRETARY REPLIED THAT HE HOPED IN TIME THAT THE U.S. LEVEL OF SUPPORT COULD BE INCREASED, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT CITE ANY SPECIFIC FIGURES.

6. DEPARTMENT: PASS TO OTHER ADDRESSEES AS DESIRED.  
SORENSEN  
NOTE: STADIS CAPTION REMOVED PER GENEVA 4654.

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